

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 04328 050917Z

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ACTION EA-10

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P 050828Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4792

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 4328

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: AEMR OGEN VS

SUBJECT: EVACUATION OF LOCAL NATIONALS FROM DANANG AND NHA TRANG

REF: STATE 076129

1. MISSION IS IN PROCESS OF DEVELOPING DATA RELATIVE TO NUMBERS OF NATIONAL EMPLOYEES EVACUATED BASED ON ACTUAL HEAD COUNT PLUS BEST INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM PROVINCE AND REGION PERSONNEL (US) WHO ACTUALLY LOADED LOCALS ON AIRCRAFT, TUGS, BOATS, SHIPS, ETC., MANY OF WHICH WERE HEADED FOR DIFFERENT DESTINATIONS. WE ARE NOW IN PROCESS OF SORTING THIS OUT HOWEVER IT WILL TAKE SOME TIME TO PRODUCE MEANINGFUL FIGURES, AS MANY OF THESE PERSONNEL ARE IN SAIGON BUT AN UNKNOWN NUMBER (BELIEVED TO BE CONSIDERABLE) ARE IN VUNG TAU, PHU QUOC ISLAND, HAM TAN (BINH TUY PROVINCE) AND PROBABLY OTHER LOCATIONS.

2. DEPARTMENT'S IMPRESSION AS INDICATED REFTEL IS ABSOLUTELY CORRECT, I.E. EVERY EFFORT POSSIBLE (AND OFTEN SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE) THAT COULD HAVE BEEN MADE UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES WAS MADE TO EVACUATE LOCAL EMPLOYEES FROM THE PROVINCES AND FROM DANANG AND NHA TRANG. AMERICAN STAFF OF BOTH DANANG AND NHA TRANG DELAYED THEIR OWN DEPARTURE FAR BEYOND PRUDENT LIMIT AT VERY CONSIDERABLE RISK TO EFFECT THE EVACUATION OF OUR VIETNAMESE EMPLOYEES AND THEIR FAMILIES, WHO WERE UNDERSTANDABLY PANICKY. (THIS LATTER POINT SHOULD NOT OBSCURE THE OUTSTANDING, COOL PERFORMANCE OF MANY OF OUR KEY LOCALS IN THIS SITUATION.) IN THIS CONNECTION,

IF PRESS QUERIES STEM FROM CHAD HUNTLEY (UPI) STORY OF APRIL 4, DEPT MIGHT WANT TO KNOW THAT WHILE HUNTLEY NEVER ANNOUNCED HIMSELF

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PAGE 02 SAIGON 04328 050917Z

TO CONSULATE NHA TRANG FOR E&E, HE WAS ABLE TO FILE HIS STORY

BECAUSE HE GOT OUT VIA OUR CHOPPERS AND PLANES - WELL AHEAD OF MANY CONGEN STAFF, VIETNAMESE AND AMERICANS.

3. AMBASSADOR'S OFFICE WAS IN PERSON-TO-PERSON CONTACT WITH CONSULS GENERAL FRANCIS AND SPEAR DURING THE ENTIRE PERIOD OF EVACUATION EXCEPTING THE BRIEF TIME THEY PERSONALLY HAD TO LEAVE THEIR COMMUNICATIONS TO DEPART. MOST, REPEAT, MOST OF THEIR SITUATION REPORTS HAD TO DO WITH MASSIVE EFFORTS, AT GREAT PERSONAL RISK BY U.S. PERSONNEL, TO EVACUATE LOCAL EMPLOYEES. THE EVACUATION, WAS, OF COURSE, ANYTHING BUT ORDERLY AS LITERAL MOBS OF VIETNAMESE CITIZENS STORMED EACH EVAC VEHICLE AS THE "LAST PLANE OUT" SYNDROME TOOK OVER.

4. MISSION EXPECTS TO PROVIDE FIRM FIGURES ON LOCAL NATIONAL EMPLOYEES EVACUATED WITHIN A FEW DAYS BUT BELIEVES THAT PRELIMINARY AND VERY FRAGMENTARY INFORMATION NOW AVAILABLE WOULD NOT BE MEANINGFUL OR USEFUL.
MARTIN

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